

To eliminate the Morse code requirement entirely is a step in the wrong direction for Amateur Radio Service. This was the foundation on which Amateur Radio was built and still plays a big role, even in today's high-tech age, in emergency communications, which amateur radio operators have been doing for the past 100+ years.

The testing of those wishing to obtain an amateur radio license has gotten easier over the past 25 years and now we are wanting to eliminate the very item that separates amateur radio from all the other radio services out there. In the 1970's the FCC declared the 27 MHz. portion of the radio spectrum a "wasteland" because there was no way to police the "would-be" radio operators using those frequencies. This problem still exists today. And now you want to remove the very barrier that is keeping that kind of operation off the amateur radio frequencies? It's ludicrous.

If a person truly wants to get on the HF spectrum and has the mental acuity to operate intelligently in that portion of the amateur radio spectrum a simple code test is not going to stop them from getting their license.

The comment that removing the Morse code barrier would make it easier for Novice and Technician Plus amateur to get their General and higher license, is ludicrous. A Novice or Tech Plus licensee has already passed the mandatory 5 word per minute code test. What is keeping them from getting their higher-class license is taking and passing Element 3.

To eliminate the Morse code requirement would spawn a new generation of code-less operators who could not send or receive even the simplest message if it were sent using that mode. If this is the case what happens when the 9.0 earthquake hits and the only communications possible will be the ham operator on his QRP radio using CW to send out emergency messages? Who will be there to receive them? Or who for that matter will be there to send them?

Today's radios do not require the technical expertise of yester year's equipment but that does not mean the operators/communicators need to be any less knowledgeable about all modes of communications, especially when talking about emergency communications. We should be requiring more from our amateur radio operators, not less, to obtain a radio license.

I implore you to reconsider this drastic step. Maybe the rest of the World is eliminating the Morse code requirement for HF privileges but the United States should be the leader not the follower and retain that requirement if not for the General license, the at least for the Extra Class license.